

**EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT  
STRATEGIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE MEGAPROJECTS  
– AN ORGANIZATIONAL POWER PERSPECTIVE**

*A THESIS*

*Submitted by*

**JOHAN NINAN**

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**&**

**Management Discipline Group (MDG)  
BUSINESS SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY**

**AUGUST 2019**

## **CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP**

I, **Johan Ninan**, declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy**, in the Business School at the **University of Technology Sydney**.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

This thesis is the result of a research candidature jointly delivered with **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras** as part of a Collaborative Doctoral Research Degree.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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This is to certify that the thesis titled **EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE MEGAPROJECTS – AN ORGANIZATIONAL POWER PERSPECTIVE**, submitted by **Johan Ninan**, to the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai and University of Technology, Sydney, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a bona fide record of the research work done by him under our supervision. The contents of this thesis, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other Institute or University for the award of any degree or diploma.

Production Note:

Signature removed prior to publication.

**Dr. Ashwin Mahalingam**

Associate Professor

Building Technology & Construction Management Division

Department of Civil Engineering

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Production Note:

Signature removed prior to publication.

**Prof. Stewart Clegg**

Distinguished Professor

Management Discipline Group

Business School

University of Technology, Sydney

Place : Chennai

Date : 19 August 2019

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## ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Infrastructure Megaprojects, External stakeholder management, Strategic action, Organizational Power.

Infrastructure megaprojects, due to their colossal nature, can cause inconvenience to multiple external stakeholders such as stakeholders in lands, existing services and project communities. These stakeholders are difficult to manage as they interact with the project across permeable boundaries, are not accountable to the requirements of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) and cannot be governed with contractual instruments or conformance to standards as in the case of internal stakeholders. In this context, this research aims to understand *how* an infrastructure megaproject during its construction and operation phase can manage these external stakeholders through strategic action from an organizational power perspective.

Anchored in the dimensions of power, persuading strategies, framing strategies and hegemonizing strategies are observed from two exploratory case studies. Multiple organizational power theories which relate to these strategies such as influence tactics framework, bases of power framework, framing theory, governmentality theory and circuits of power theory are considered in this study. The literature review of these organizational power theories and the megaproject literature pertaining to each of these strategies helped identify gaps in the literature, for addressing which eight research questions are proposed. To address these research questions, I selected a metro rail megaproject in India. Multiple data sources from this project such as semi-structured interviews, news media articles, and social media posts were used to investigate the strategies employed by the megaproject to manage external stakeholders. Subsequent to developing twenty-one propositions through a grounded theory approach, a conceptual framework that can help explain external stakeholder management in megaprojects is proposed.

The research makes multiple contributions to theory, methodology and practice. The role of strategy in making power dynamic by creating power, using power and maintaining power is established. The definition of project community is broadened to involve all stakeholders of the project (both internal and external) as the strategies used to manage the project community percolated and trickled down to other stakeholders as they are also part of the project community.



A structured approach to study naturalistic data such as news articles and social media is proposed and their ability to contribute to megaproject research is highlighted. To practice, I contribute a framework to explain external stakeholder management in megaprojects. The study also emphasizes the role of the covert strategies such as framing and hegemonizing in dictating the visible stakeholder management strategies such as persuading strategies, and vice versa.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.1.1 Megaprojects.....	1
1.1.2 Reasons for poor performance .....	4
1.1.3 Pluralism .....	5
1.2 External Stakeholders .....	8
1.3 Significance of Study.....	10
1.4 Strategic Action .....	14
1.4.1 Strategic Action in Organizations.....	14
1.4.2 Strategic Action in Projects .....	15
1.5 Organization Theories.....	17
1.6 Organizational Power.....	18
1.7 Structure of Thesis .....	21
<b>Chapter 2 Exploratory Studies.....</b>	<b>26</b>
2.1 Objectives of Exploratory Study.....	26
2.2 Cases .....	26
2.2.1 Metro rail megaproject in India .....	26
2.2.2 City rebuilding megaproject in Australia.....	27
2.3 Exploratory Study Method.....	28
2.4 Findings and Discussion .....	32
2.4.1 First Dimension of Power and Persuading strategies .....	33
2.4.2 Second Dimension of Power and Framing strategies .....	34
2.4.3 Third Dimension of Power and Hegemonizing strategies .....	35

2.4.4 Relation between Dimensions of Power and relation between strategies.....	38
2.5 Take-aways .....	38
2.6 Research Objectives for In-depth Study .....	40
2.7 Scope of the study .....	41
2.8 Concluding Remarks.....	41
<b>Chapter 3 Literature Review and Research Questions .....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 Introduction to Organizational Power Theories.....	43
3.2 Influence Tactics Framework and Bases of Power Framework .....	45
3.2.1 Influence tactics framework.....	46
3.2.2 Bases of power framework .....	47
3.2.3 Relation between influence tactics framework and bases of power framework.....	48
3.2.4 Persuading strategies in projects.....	49
3.3 Framing Theory .....	51
3.3.1 Framing .....	51
3.3.2 Framing and Organizational Power .....	52
3.3.3 Framing in megaprojects.....	54
3.4 Governmentality Theory .....	56
3.4.1 Governance .....	56
3.4.2 Governmentality .....	57
3.4.3 Governmentality in Projects .....	58
3.4.4 Governmentality through Branding .....	59
3.5 Circuits of Power Theory.....	61
3.5.1 Circuits of Power theory .....	62
3.5.2 Technologies of Power .....	63
3.5.3 Circuits of Power in projects.....	65
3.6 Concluding Remarks.....	66
<b>Chapter 4 Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>71</b>
4.1 Research Design.....	71
4.2 Research Method .....	74
4.3 The Context and Case .....	75
4.3.1 Context – India.....	75
4.3.2 Case – Metro rail megaproject.....	80
4.4 Data Collection .....	83

4.4.1 Semi-structured interviews .....	84
4.4.2 News media articles .....	88
4.4.3 Social media posts.....	91
4.5 Data Analysis .....	94
4.5.1 Grounded theory .....	95
4.5.2. Qualitative Content Analysis .....	99
4.6 Reflexivity of the researcher .....	100
4.7 Qualitative Rigor.....	102
4.6.1 Construct validity (Confirmability) .....	103
4.6.2 Internal validity (Credibility).....	103
4.6.3 External validity (transferability).....	104
4.6.4 Reliability (dependability) .....	105
4.8 Concluding Remarks.....	108
<b>Chapter 5 Persuading Strategies .....</b>	<b>110</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	110
5.2 Findings and Discussion .....	111
5.2.1 Strategies in practice for managing external stakeholders.....	111
5.2.2 Resource-based power that enables Strategies .....	132
5.3 Concluding Remarks.....	138
<b>Chapter 6 Framing Strategies.....</b>	<b>141</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	141
6.2 Findings and Discussion .....	143
6.2.1 Framing Strategies .....	143
6.2.2 Framing Effects.....	157
6.3 Concluding Remarks.....	163
<b>Chapter 7 Hegemonizing Strategies .....</b>	<b>165</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	165
7.2 Findings and Discussion .....	167
7.2.1 Hegemonizing instruments for the community.....	167
7.2.2 Effects of hegemonizing strategies on the project team and community .....	174
7.3 Concluding Remarks.....	185

<b>Chapter 8 Relation between Strategies .....</b>	<b>188</b>
8.1 Introduction.....	188
8.2 Findings and Discussion .....	190
8.2.1 Relation between strategies.....	190
8.2.2 Technologies of power in management of external stakeholders .....	204
8.3 Concluding Remarks.....	214
<b>Chapter 9 Summary and Conclusion.....</b>	<b>217</b>
9.1 Summary .....	217
9.2 Contribution to Theory .....	219
9.2.1 Contributions to strategy theory.....	219
9.2.2 Contributions to organizational power theory .....	219
9.2.3 Contributions to project management theory.....	220
9.3 Contribution to Research Methodology.....	223
9.3.1 Contributions to data collection .....	223
9.3.2 Contributions to data analysis.....	224
9.4 Contribution to Practice .....	225
9.4.1 Explaining the practice .....	225
9.4.2 Recommendations for practice .....	226
9.5 Limitations and Future Scope of Work.....	228
<b>References.....</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Appendix-A Interview Protocol For Semi-Structured Interviews .....</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Appendix-B List of News Media Articles Retrived for the Study .....</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>Appendix-C Social Media (Twitter) Data and their Codes from Qualitative Content Analysis .....</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>List of Publications based of this Thesis .....</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Curriculum Vitae.....</b>	<b>347</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 2.1:</b> Salient features of cases considered in exploratory study .....	28
<b>Table 2.2:</b> Details of exploratory study interviews conducted in metro rail project.....	29
<b>Table 2.3:</b> Details of exploratory study interviews conducted in Australian city rebuilding project .....	31
<b>Table 2.4:</b> Summary of key take-aways from exploratory study .....	40
<b>Table 3.1:</b> Summary of research sub-objectives, research theories, research gaps, and research questions .....	69
<b>Table 4.1:</b> Timeline of the metro rail project .....	80
<b>Table 4.2:</b> Details of interviews conducted in the metro rail project.....	85
<b>Table 4.3:</b> Organizations from the project team interviewed.....	88
<b>Table 4.4:</b> Number of articles selected from each newspaper .....	91
<b>Table 4.5:</b> Social media data considered for the study .....	94
<b>Table 4.6:</b> Number of Tweets in each category .....	99
<b>Table 4.7:</b> Methods use to achieve qualitative rigour .....	107
<b>Table 5.1:</b> Summary of Persuading strategies practiced in the metro rail project case .....	130
<b>Table 6.1:</b> Goal Framing Instances .....	147
<b>Table 6.2:</b> Pride Framing Instances.....	150
<b>Table 6.3:</b> Community-centric Framing Instances.....	153
<b>Table 6.4:</b> Blame framing instances.....	157
<b>Table 8.1:</b> Summary of relation between strategies observed in the metro rail megaproject case .....	196
<b>Table 8.2:</b> Summary of propositions.....	200
<b>Table 8.3:</b> ICT enabled external stakeholder management strategies consolidated from the metro rail case .....	207
<b>Table 8.4:</b> Social frame and natural frame enabled by the use of ICT .....	210
<b>Table 9.1:</b> Summary of contribution to theory.....	222
<b>Table 9.2:</b> Summary of contribution to research methodology .....	225
<b>Table 9.3:</b> Summary of contribution to practice .....	227

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1.1:</b> Dimensions of power - adapted from Lukes (2005) .....	21
<b>Figure 1.2:</b> Structure of the thesis .....	22
<b>Figure 2.1:</b> Strategies for external stakeholder management from the exploratory case studies. ....	37
<b>Figure 3.1:</b> Organizational power theories for explaining strategies.....	45
<b>Figure 3.2:</b> Relation between bases of power and influence tactics (compiled from literature) . ....	49
<b>Figure 4.1:</b> Research Design.....	72
<b>Figure 4.2:</b> External stakeholders considered for in-depth study .....	79
<b>Figure 4.3:</b> Grounded theory flow chart .....	96
<b>Figure 5.1:</b> Research Methodology for persuading strategies .....	110
<b>Figure 5.2:</b> Persuading Strategies and Resource-based Power from the case .....	138
<b>Figure 6.1:</b> Research Methodology for Framing Strategies.....	141
<b>Figure 6.2:</b> Framing strategies, effects and their relation observed in the megaproject .....	162
<b>Figure 7.1:</b> Research Methodology for hegemonizing strategies .....	165
<b>Figure 7.2:</b> Hegemonizing strategies and effects from the case .....	175
<b>Figure 7.3:</b> Trickling down effect of strategies on the project team.....	184
<b>Figure 8.1:</b> Research methodology for relation between strategies.....	188
<b>Figure 8.2:</b> Frameworks of persuading, framing and hegemonizing strategies.....	189
<b>Figure 8.3:</b> Relation between overt and covert strategies.....	199
<b>Figure 8.4:</b> External stakeholder management strategies framework.....	202
<b>Figure 8.5:</b> ICT enabled strategies for external stakeholder management .....	213
<b>Figure 8.6:</b> Mapping forms of ICT and its strategic use.....	214

## ABBREVIATIONS

ANT	Actor Network Theory
AR	Augmented Reality
BIM	Building Information Model
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DMIC	Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor
DPR	Detailed Project Report
FRP	Fibre Reinforced Plastic
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIFT	Gujarat International Finance Tec-City
HVAC	Heating ventilation and Air conditioning
ICT	Information Communications Technology
INR	Indian National Rupee
IT	Information Technology
MEP	Mechanical Electrical Plumbing
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRTS	Mass Rapid Transit System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHL	Overhead lines
OPP	Obligatory Passage Points
PSD	Platform Screen Doors
RQ	Research Question
SNA	Social Network Analysis
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
UITP	International Association of Public Transport
USD	United States Dollar
VR	Virtual Reality